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ABSTRACT

Better educated, more skillful counselors are needed in the public schools. They need to have positive attitudes toward all persons in the school and societal arenas. The guidance counselor must be able to identify problems, and decisions should encourage and motivate, not defeat the involved person. The guidance counselor faces opportunities to select and solve problems with counselee involvement, and must be approachable and have an open door policy for students. Confidentiality of what transpires in counseling situations is a must. To provide for individual differences among students, diverse procedures of counseling students may need to be used. Behaviorism may well guide learners to achieve, grow, and develop. With behaviorism, predetermined, precise objectives need careful selection. Each objective becomes a goal for student attainment. Either the student does or does not achieve the specific objective as a result of improved situations or perceptions. Each measurably stated objective achieved by a student should be reinforced. Successive approximations and shaping are two concepts, vital to understand and implement, using the psychology of behaviorism to change behavior. Humanism stresses the salience of students making choices from among alternatives. With humanism, the student becomes more open about the self in an atmosphere of trust and responsibility. Numerous procedures may be considered and used in counseling and guidance. The procedure utilized must assist students to achieve optimally in school and in society. (LLL)

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Excellence in the Counseling Curriculum

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EXCELLENCE IN THE COUNSELING CURRICULUM

Increased responsibilities of the guidance-counselor are continually in the offing. Better educated, more skillful counselors are needed in the public schools. They need to have positive attitudes toward all persons in the school and societal arenas. An attitude of acceptance of all is especially needed when

1. twenty to twenty-five percent of children come from poverty level homes.

2. increased numbers of fetal alcohol syndrome children born of alcoholic mothers is in evidence.

3. children are born in larger numbers than ever of drug addicted mothers.

4. premature babies possessing single or multiple handicaps are saved at birth. Recently, a fourteen ounce infant remained alive due to the many advances available in medical science.

5. all students are expected to achieve at a higher level due to national and state goals in educational performance.

Problem Solving an the Guidance Counselor

The guidance counselor needs to be able to identify problems. Clearly stated problems are needed. Students face problems which might be overwhelming and greatly hinder achievement in school. After problem identification, information must be secured, directly related to the problem. There are problems that need rather quick solutions; others have a less demanding time schedule. A hypothesis or answer to the problem should result. The hypothesis is tested in school and in society.

Modifications are needed if the hypothesis did not work as planned.

The guidance counselor then needs to be a problem solver, cooperatively, with the counselee. Problems are looked upon as challenges, not as hindrances to achievement. Life consists of major and minor obstacles. Opportunities exist to choose and attempt to obtain needed solutions to these perplexities. The universe offers the good, the neutral, and the negative. What is negative provides challenges and choices. A human being can learn to accept what is negative as challenges to overcome. Each dilemma offers its passport to decision-making. Decisions to be made should encourage and motivate, not defeat the involved person.

Thus guidance-counselors face opportunities to select and solve problems with counselee involvement. He/she needs to look at life and develop a philosophy of goodness in that behavior of counselees can be changed through problem solving procedures. Whatever is good, true, and beautiful needs to be experienced by all, including students in the school setting. The guidance counselor has this as a major goal in his/her profession.

Problems needing solutions include students learning to

1. cope with unfortunate home situations.
2. resist use of harmful substances.
3. develop purpose and zest for life and living.

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4. achieve positive attitudes toward the world of work.

5. make and maintain friends.

Guidance counselors must be approachable and have an open door policy for students. Confidentiality of what transpires in counseling situations is a must. Students should feel welcome to discuss problems with the guidance counselor. They believe that quality services and assistance are available. Students should believe that guidance counselors possess competency in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. They believe that inservice education is continually in evidence to promote guidance counselor decision-making abilities. Time spent with the guidance counselor may be time well spent, not wasted. The guidance counselor makes referrels when needed and necessary. He/she understands limitations of his/her professional ability, but works together with other professionals for the well being of the student. The student is paramount and comes first in decision-making and problem solving. He/she is guided to achieve more optimally in school and in society.

Behaviorism and the Guidance Counselor

To provide for individual differences among students, diverse procedures of counseling students may need to be in the offing. Each person is unique and needs assistance to attain more optimally. Behaviorism may well guide learners to achieve, grow, and develop.

With behaviorism, predetermined, precise objectives

need careful selection. Each objective becomes a goal for student attainment. Either the student does or does not achieve the specific objective as a result of improved situations or perceptions. The objectives, written by the guidance counselor or cooperatively determined by the counselee and the guidance counselor, must reflect deficiencies experiences by the student. The deficit may then become a specific, precise objective. Means, methods, and approaches need to be sought to guide learner goal attainment. The ends(goals) and curriculum(procedures of achieving goals) are integrated, not separate entities. Thus attitudes reflected within goals for student attainment and procedures stressed for achievement guide learners to attain in a more optimal manner on an individual basis. Both ends(objectives) and curriculum(instruction) must be that which aid learners in affective development.

Each measurably stated objective achieved by a student should be reinforced. Praise or physical prizes may be utilized as reinforcers. The learners need to feel rewarded as a result of goal attainment. Individual goals achieved spur learners on to greater and higher levels of attainment. Sequential objectives arranged in ascending order of complexity guide students in desiring to achieve more optimally. Successive approximations and shaping are two concepts, vital to understand and implement, using the psychology of behaviorism to change behavior.

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The guidance counselor must thoroughly understand theories stressing behaviorism. He/she must also be able to implement quality skills and attitudes of behaviorism.

Which areas of deficit behavior might be modified due to tenets of behaviorism?

1. unwise use of school time.
2. misbehavior of learners in the classroom.
3. tendency to worry excessively over happenings and events.
4. exhibit behavior of extreme shyness and self-consciousness in the presence of others.
5. lack of adequate self-concept.

Humanism in Guidance Counseling

Humanism stresses the salience of students making choices, from among alternatives. Much input from learners needs to go into the curriculum of school and in life. Student-teacher planning of objectives, learning opportunities, and appraisal procedures emphasizes tenets of humanism. A primary objective for guidance counselors is to assist in developing students who achieve well in school. The school curriculum affects students rather thoroughly and is a highly salient factor in guiding total optimal progress presently as well as for the future. A student experiencing humanism as a psychology of learning might achieve better than when a different psychology is utilized, in whole or in part. Individual differences must be provided for. Each student differs from others in many and sundry ways.

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With humanism, the student becomes more open about the self in an atmosphere of trust and responsibility. The guidance counselor also exhibits traits of complete openness as well as being trustful of others. With complete freedom to explore, to examine, and reflect upon that which transpired in oral communication between counselor and counselee, awareness of the feelings of others is salient. The feeling dimension of the self and of others must have careful consideration between counselor and counselee.

The guidance counselor in these situations faces many complex situations which cannot be predetermined. Which problem areas of students should encourage open-ended interaction between the counselor and the counselee(s).

1. thoughts of, means to, and actual attempts at, suicide are continual problems for school age students. The junior and senior levels of high school students are particularly vulnerable. However, the literature on elementary and preschool age of pupils are not immune to the concept of suicide.

2. lack of purpose in life. This problem relates to number one but is different in emphasis. Students need to find reasons for life and living. They need to determine values for this life and its numerous opportunities. The opportunities come into brightness and then fade, in degrees. The will and desire to live must receive adequate emphasis in the school curriculum. The concepts of purpose, will, and desire to live are complex indeed, especially when students feel the opposite dimension.

3. divorce situations whereby the parents will no longer be together to assist the school age student. A new relationship develops. Bitterness between parents may be an end result as to who receives custody of the offspring.

4. feelings of not being accepted by the parent(s). Rejection by parents is a harmful feeling by the child. Inadequate self-concepts result from these situations. A student then cannot attain in any optimal development.

In Closing

Numerous procedures may be considered and used in counseling and guidance.

1. Problem solving by guidance counselors emphasizes identification and solutions of dilemma situations.

2. Behaviorism with its measurably stated objectives predetermined for student attainment. Reinforcement assists students to develop strong connections between the stimulus and the response.

3. Humanism with it stress upon heavy student involvement in discussing concerns with guidance counselors.

The procedure utilized must assist students to achieve more optimally in school and in society. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes, quality in nature, attained by the student should insure increased positive affective development by students.